



## Children and Trauma: Intro Written Video Transcript

### Children Trauma Intro

[00:00.20.00] One afternoon about an hour after school had closed the children were playing on the street next to the school. And one of the fathers was out there playing with the children when a car pulled up. And the father grabbed his daughter in front of him and they shot him [00:00.40.00] and killed him. And they shot him about four, five inches above her head. The other children in the street witnessed that. That came into my school the next day like a thunderbolt and just rolled through my school. It's a common occurrence in America. But it's not common [00:01.00.00] until you have gone through it. This can happen anywhere in America, in any school in America. [00:01.20.00]

Our city is cracked. There was nowhere to go but down, lower and lower. I am torn just as my city is cracked. [00:01.40.00]

It's all behind me now and I'm back to normal. But sometime in my dreams I still hear the crying of my little brother and the screams of our best friend whose mother died. Then my alarm goes off. [00:02.00.00] Was it just a dream or not, or not, or not?

When a disaster comes the persons [00:02.20.00] that are on the margin are on the most impacted. Living in poverty, living on the verge of homelessness are disasters that many people and many children have to deal with every day. It's an ongoing factor of life. And it's increasingly so.

For some children [00:02.40.00] being in school and staying in that same school despite moving all around and moving across boundaries and so forth provides the only stability in their life. And many of the youngsters school is important, getting a good grade is important. And it's important that they don't lose that value because they have [00:03.00.00] very few other things they can hang onto.

I often say that to my teachers the one thing you've got to remember is you don't know what a child goes through to get here. Very hard on children.

Any principal's worst nightmare would be contemplating [00:03.20.00] what would I do if a disaster struck my particular school and any number of my students were injured or killed. What would I do to take care of them? How would I take care of the families? How would I take care of the needs of my teachers, my counselors and my whole administrative [00:03.40.00] staff?



The principal has to give leadership. And if the principal isn't committed to the idea that children need to be taught how to deal with disaster then the school's going to fail in that program.

The schools are very important in the recovery of children because [00:04.00.00] in some ways they're equal to the home as an environment where the child is spending many hours in which teachers and principals and the staff of the school have a real importance in the child's mind. And as a place in which the structured environment of their day can provide a real recovery environment for them after a disaster or a violent event.

It's [00:04.20.00] not uncommon for teachers to wonder what will a clinician do when they arrive at the school? And that depends on of course various circumstances. However clinicians or mental health teams work in the classroom, entire classrooms at a time. They may work with a selected group of high risk children. Or they may work with [00:04.40.00] an individual child depending on that child's needs. A mental health team may take on several roles. So, one is that of providing information about normal and prolonged stress reactions for the school staff, for the parents, the children themselves. They can also provide direct services to the school's staff [00:05.00.00] in the way of debriefing, structured or unstructured.

One assumes automatically that teachers know everything. And a teacher walks in a classroom everybody expects that teacher to teach everything. That's not the case. Teachers need training. There's no preparation by the universities [00:05.20.00] for this kind of teaching.

This program where we brought mental health professionals into the classroom, into schools to work with teachers, has expanded our knowledge and our understanding of what happens to kids when a disaster strikes and gives us some real tools [00:05.40.00] that we can work with in the classroom to make a difference.

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